

# Virgil's Culex

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## Vergil's Culex.

That such a poem as the Culex was in existence in ancient times, and that it was commonly attributed to Vergil, is shown conclusively by the testimony of early writers. Martial, who lived in the second half of the first century A. D. (40-102 A.D.) has two references to the Culex- Martial XIV-185-"Accipe facundi Culicern, studiose, Maronis"- "Take up the Culex of fluent Maro." Also Mart. VIII, 56,57. "Protinus Italiam concepit et Arma virumque, Qui modo vix Culicem fleverat ore rudi." "Then he entered upon Italia and Arma virumque, he who had scarcely finished with untaught lips the mournful strains of the Culex!"

Suetonius (75-A.D.) says in his Life of Lucan-"Quin tantae levitatis et tam immoderatae linguae fuit, ut in praefatione quadam aetatem et initia sua cum Vergilii comparans, ausus est dicere!- Et quantum mihi restat ad Culicem?"- "Nay rather, he had such levity of mind and was so unrestrained in speech, that comparing his own age and beginnings with Vergil's, in a certain preface he dared to say- And how much remains to me for a Culex?"

And Suetonius in his life of Vergil also says-Deinde (scripsit) catalepton et priapia et epigrammata et diras, item Cirin et Culicen cum esset annorum XVI.

Statius, whose date is 45-96 A.D. in his preface to the first book of the Silvae-"Sed et Culicem et Batrachomyomachian etiam cognoscimus. Ne quisquam est illustrium poetarum, qui non aliquid operibus suis stilo remissiore proluserit." "But I have read both the Culex and the Battle of the frogs and mice. Nor is there any illustrious poet who among his works has not written something with pen too remiss." And again Statius in his poem on Lucan's birthday when he makes Orpheus



prophecy concerning Lucan's future glory, says- "Haec primo juvenis canes sub aevo Ante annos Culicis Maroniani." (Silv. II, 7, 73, 74.) "These things you will sing as a youth before the age at which Maro wrote the Culex."

Nonius Marcellus (280-A.D.) p. 211. in regard to the gender of "labrusca" says- "Labrusca genere femenino Vergilius in Bucolicis (V,7) Neutro Vergilius in Culice (l. 53.)

Servius 390 A.D.) says- "Scripsit etiam septem sive octo libros hos: Cirin, Aetam, Culicem, priapia, catelepton, epigrammata, Copam, diras." "He wrote also these seven or eight books: Ciris, Aetna, Culex priapia, Catelepton, epigrammata, Copa and Dirae."

From these references it appears that a poem written by Vergil and called the Culex was undoubtedly in existence at a very early date. Martial (40-102 A.D.) is the earliest author who mentions it, or if we believe Lucan's quotation (65, A.D.) that is the earliest. The passage in which Martial refers to it could not have been written until about eighty years after Vergil's death (19, B.C.) or something over a hundred years after the time Vergil is supposed to have composed the poem (54, B.C.) Ribbeck sums up this testimony as follows: The Culex as we now have it was without doubt in existence by the end of the third century A.D. Suetonius gives the plot of it and quotes two lines. Nonius Marcellus also quotes a line from it. Martial, Statius and Lucan evidently had read a Culex by Vergil, whether it is the same one we now have or not.

The Culex is found in none of the seven best manuscripts of the third and the fourth centuries A.D. and is first found in the MSS. Vaticanus of the ninth century along with several of the so-called minor poems under the title- "Ludi juvenalis Maronis Vergilii."

Following this there are countless manuscripts of a more recent date, very similar in text to the Vaticanus. In the majority of these manuscripts the lesser poems are given in the following order: - Culex, Dirae, Copa, Aetna, Ciris, Priapia, Catalecta,.

Teuffell says that all these manuscripts as well as the Vaticanus are copies of a very early original which has been lost.

Cardinal Pietro Bembo (1470-1547 A.D.) was the first to attempt any extensive emendation to the text. In 1505 and again in 1534 he published editions of the lesser poems of Vergil, and in 1530 he published in Venice a commentary on the Culex, in a book entitled- "De Culice Vergilii et Terenti fabulis." Bembo is the principal authority followed by Leo in his recent special edition of the Culex, and Leo's close adherence to Bembo's text is manifested in the difficulties which some passages present without further emendating.

#### --Attitude of Ancients towards Culex.--

It is evident that the ancients regarded the Culex as a piece of literature, with scarcely more favor than it is regarded in the present day. Martials- "Qui modo vix Culicem fleverat ore rudi," Lucan's "Et quantum mihi restat ad Culicem," and Statius,- "Ne quisquam est illustrium poetarum qui non aliquid operibus sine stilo remissione pro luserit," show that at a very early date, it was recognized that the Culex in relation to the other works of Vergil occupied a very low place nor has the passage of time brought about an opinion any more favorable to this work. This unfavorable opinion is due to the peculiar character of the poem, its lack of poetic feeling, the redundancy of style and the over use of figures and ornamentation.

Partly on this account and from various other causes the belief has arisen that Vergil did not write the Culex and many arguments are brought forward to prove this view. Most modern editors take the position that the Culex as we have it now was not written by Vergil. Among these are Sillig, Wagner, Leo, Bahrens, Teuffel and Ribbeck, although Ribbeck formerly believed in its authenticity, and Heyne believes we have Vergil's poem extensively interpolated. Cruttwell also says that the Culex is "possibly genuine."

The fact that the Culex is not found in any one of the seven manuscripts of Vergil's but is found in a much more recent one of the ninth century has given rise to the belief that the Culex as we now have it was unknown in very early times or if in existence its authorship was not ascribed to Vergil, and hence it is spurious. Teuffel says that the Vaticanus is a copy of a very old manuscript, and therefore is taken from a source as old or perhaps older than those of the third and fourth century. Moreover it is probable that during the lifetime of Vergil the lesser poems were never published with his greater works, either because they were written so long before the Bucolics, or because Vergil himself was not very proud of them and was unwilling to associate them with his other works, or because his admirers thought them of too little worth to be associated with his greater poems after his death. Bahrens holds the view that the poems were not published during Vergil's lifetime but after his death they were published at the command of Claudius, and the epigram beginning "Vate Syracosio," having been added the poems were commonly accepted as Vergil's. Nor can we ignore the fact that the Culex is attributed to Vergil at a very early date by Martial, Statius, Lucan and Suetonius, so that it must have

been in existence at a very early date in some form or other. Teuffel takes the very bold ground that the ancients were mistaken, but I think we have no grounds for throwing aside their evidence as worthless

Cruttwell and Teuffel in his Roman Literature criticise the plot of the Culex thinking that the original plot could only have been--The gnat could not rest in Hades and therefore asked the shepherd whose life it had saved for a decent burial. They claim that this motive is entirely lacking in the Culex as we now have it, and on this account the plot being so defective, the poem cannot be considered Vergilian.

But while the idea that the gnat cannot rest in Hades is not expressed in so many words, still the idea is self evident through-out the poem.

The gnat would not have been likely to revisit the earth if he had found found rest in Hades, nor would he have been allowed to recross the dark waters of the Styx, if he had once been admitted as an inmate of Hades. The obvious supposition is that he could not find rest there and so came back to earth to entreat burial for himself. Even admitting the defect in the plot, this does not in any way offer conclusive evidence that the poem could not have been written by Vergil for Vergil has other examples in his writings of defective situations. For example, in the Sixth Book of the Aeneid, after leading up to Aeneas visit to Hades by prophecies and omens and giving it the authority and sanction of the Sibyl, and after recounting the stirring scenes which Aeneas witnesses in Hades, and his meeting with his father Anchises who prophesies the future glory of Rome, Aeneas is dismissed from Hades by the gate of false visions, thus destroying the idea of reality which the book ought to have to justify its existence. Vergil's inability to tell a story connectedly is shown in all his works, In

the first Eclogue Menalcas is sometimes Vergil and at other times a shepherd. Another defective plot is found in Georgics IV. While Vergil is consistent in his inability to work out a plot, he is also consistent throughout the Culex, Eclogues, Georgics and the Aenid<sup>e</sup> in his beautiful descriptions of nature.

From this we see that a defective plot is not an unparelled occurrence in Vergil, and would be much more excusable in a boy of sixteen years than it would be in a man of the age at which Vergil wrote the Aenid<sup>e</sup>, and who had been writing for many years before that.

Teuffel and Heyne speak of the frequent imitations of Vergil's later works in the Culex, giving that as an argument in favor of the view that Vergil did not write it, but that it was patched together by some later author, who, wishing to imitate Vergil, made use of his thoughts and expressions.

Ribbeck in his "Geschichte der Romischen Dichtung" uses as an example of this the sixth book of the Aenid<sup>e</sup> and the description of the ~~serpent in Culex~~ Hades in Culex. Other passages which he quotes are the description of the serpent in Culex 163-174, Geo. II, 428-440 and Aenid<sup>e</sup> II, 199-211, and the eulogy on pastoral life in Culex 58-98 and Geo. II, 458- 474. While the ideas are the same and there is a certain similarity in the manner of expression yet there very few actual coincidences in the use of words. The description of rural life in the Georgics is shorter, more concise and more evenly balanced than the passage in the Culex which is a digression from the main topic and is prolonged beyond just proportion.

In all of these instances the real literary merit increases, the later its time of composition. In the passages which contain the description of the serpent two of them are known absolutely to have been written by Vergil, yet there is as much similarity between the two



known to be genuine as there is between the passage in the Culex and that in the Georgics. As to the statement which Ribbeck makes, that the description of Hades in the Culex is taken entirely from the sixth book of the Aeneid, a close examination of the two passages will admit of a view which to me is more likely,-- Vergil's crudity of composition as a boy and the great improvement of his style in his later works. Ribbeck also in his edition of Vergil's text published sometime before his Roman Literature, at which time he had changed his mind, defends <sup>ta</sup> these passages from the charge of imitation on the ground that they are but the crude drafts of scenes and ideas which Vergil, the mature poet made use of again, expressing himself with true poetic instinct. This seems to me a very probable view to take. The fact that an author once makes use of an illustration is no proof that he would never use it again. Some novelists of the present day use the same plot in more than one novel, with a change in character and situations.

Bahrens objects to the Culex because of the rarity of elision-- the eliding of a long syllable occurring nowhere in the Culex, while elision of both long and short syllables is exceedingly common in Vergil's other works. He thinks that a man who, in his middle age was so careless about elision, would have been more so in his youth and therefore the Culex does not belong to Vergil <sup>more</sup> but to some pedant who cared for form than for content. But it seems to me that the very pains which the author of the Culex took to prevent elision is the mark of a young scholar who had not yet emancipated himself from the dry precepts taught him by grammarians, and who had not yet emerged from the formative period into the mature and elegant poet.

It would be only natural for a boy of sixteen years to think more of the mechanics of poetry than of what he really wished to say. We can see to some extent this same feeling of dependency in the Eclogues, modeled as they were after Theocritus, beautiful to be sure, but at times amounting to little more than a direct translation from the Greek

The crudity of composition is another objection to its Vergilian authorship. The labored sentences, devoid of poetic feeling, the repetition of thought, the heaping up of figures, and the repetition of words in close proximity to each other, are all faults in style very unlike Vergil's later method, which is marked by conciseness and brevity, and by a happy use of words to express his thought smoothly and elegantly, while the words are always subordinate to the thought.

Bahrens in his *Poetae Latini Minores* says that the man who wrote the *Culex* could never have amounted to anything as a poet. This, I think, is a rather radical view to take. We have many examples of men changing their style of writing as they grew older. Longfellow is a recent example which illustrates this fact for there is an immense difference between his first poem, "Mr. Finney's Turnip," which is purely doggerel, and his *Evangeline*.

I admit that the crudity of style is, to me, one of the strongest reasons against its having been written by Vergil, but yet if we suppose Vergil wrote it at the age of sixteen, we can expect to find all the marks of an unskilled beginner in the poem. Again Vergil spent eleven years in writing the *Aenid* and was very diligent in polishing up his lines. The *Culex* must have been finished within a year at most. To say that the writer of the *Culex* could never have amounted to anything is about as conclusive an argument as it would be to say that the winner of an Olympian foot-race could never have passed

through the crawling period in his life.

Bährens also thinks, if the Culex had been written by Vergil, Vergil or some one of his contemporaries, most likely Ovid, would have mentioned it. But we may see from the Eclogues how difficult it is to obtain internal evidence from Vergil, and the fact that Ovid has no direct reference to a poem of so little importance as the Culex is no proof of its non-existence. Nor does Ovid mention the Georgics.

Heyne thinks Vergil wrote such a poem as the Culex, but because of the many repetitions of thought and redundant style, the original poem has been greatly mutilated and the copy we now have of the Culex is but partly genuine, the remaining lines having been added after Vergil's lifetime. As Cicero was the pattern for all orators after his time, so Vergil and Ovid were imitated by poets, and it became a common custom for scholars and would-be poets to practice upon the poems of Vergil and Ovid, by expressing one thought in various ways. These variations, written in the margins of the manuscripts, were subsequently copied into manuscripts with the original verses, either through the ignorance of copyists or because they wished to make a longer and therefore more saleable manuscript.

Heyne proceeds to reconstruct the Culex in accordance with his own views and decides which verses are spurious and which were written by Vergil. He therefore cuts the poem of four hundred and thirteen verses down to ninety-nine verses leaving out almost all of the description of Hades. This selection, while satisfactory to Heyne, does not and cannot meet the approval of other editors and scholars, for the reason that no two men would agree on the same lines and there would be as many different versions as there are men.

Nor can there be any fixed rule by which we may determine whether a line is spurious or not. Sillig in his preface to the Heyne- Wagner edition of Vergil, attacks Heyne's theory of interpolation and says that Heyne has left out some of the best lines and put in some of the most worthless, that he makes the serpent appear like a thunderclap out of a clear sky, and if Vergil ever wrote any such poem as Heyne's reconstructed Culex, he must have done so for the express accomodation of interpolators. One of Heyne's arguments for the interpolation theory is the outline of the plot given in Suetonius' Life of Vergil. Suetonius says- Then he wrote the catalepton, priapia, epigrammata and dirae, likewise, the ciris and the Culex when he was sixteen years old. Its contents are as follows: A shepherd, when, worn out by heat, he had fallen asleep under a tree, and a serpent was hastening to him from the swamp, a gnat flew up and implanted his sting on the temples of the shepherd, But he immediately crushed and killed the gnat and built a tomb for it and composed these two lines-

"Parve Culex pecudum custos tibi merenti

Funeris officium vitae pro munere reddit."

In this outline of the plot of the Culex nothing is said of the gnat's visit to Hades, nor of the many sights seen there, the description of which occupies the greater part of the Culex as we now have it.

On this account Heyne thinks the greater part of the Culex has been added after this time. But this passage from Suetonius cannot be regarded as a proof of interpolation because in the bare outline of a plot much would necessarily have to be omitted and merely the skeleton of the story given.

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Ribbeck in his Geschichte der Römischen Dichtung, says that Vergil

could not have written the Culex because in line 402 the author speaks of the oleander which was not introduced into Italy before the second half of the first century A.D., therefore Vergil could have known nothing of the plant, and the poem must have been written by some author long after Vergil's death. But even if the oleander was not introduced into Italy until the latter half of the first century B.C., that proves nothing, for in the text the Greek word for oleander is given- rhododaphne. Now a student such as Vergil undoubtedly was, would be acquainted with the Greek name of the flower, though he had never seen the flower itself and his use of it is perfectly natural. In the Eclogues also he introduces plants and scenery foreign to Italy. Therefore this point proves nothing.

There seems to be some question as to the date of the writing of the Culex. Statius, writing of Lucan says that he is to write his Pharsalia before the age at which Vergil wrote the Culex. Lucan was born in 39 A.D. and wrote his Pharsalia in 65 A.D. which would make him twenty-six years old. Cruttwell and Tueffel, from this passage think that Vergil must have written the Culex at the age of twenty-six. But all the other references place the date of its composition when Vergil was sixteen, and judging from the character of the poem it must if it is Vergil's have been written at the earlier date since it is inconceivable that Vergil wrote the Culex only two years before the Eclogues.

It is not yet settled to whom Vergil has addressed his poem. In line I, he mentions one, Octavvius and in 25 addresses him as Octavi venerande, in 26, as sancte puer. By those who do not believe in the Vergilian authorship of the Culex, it is thought that Octavvius must refer



to the Emperor Octavianus, to whom Vergil dedicated his first Eclogue and who treated him with such marked kindness. But at the time when the Culex was written Octavius, afterwards called Octavianus, who was born in 63 B.C. could not have been more than nine years old, and was then of no importance whatever, as it was not until several years later that his uncle Julius Caesar, made his coup d'etat. Moreover we know from Servius and the Berne scholia that Vergil was not introduced to Octavius until about twelve years after the Culex was written. So it seems impossible that the Octavius of the Culex could be the Octavianus of later years. This is used as an argument by those who do not believe in the Vergilian authorship of the poem. They say that some one, having written the poem, and desiring to make it seem as much as possible like Vergil's remembered Octavianus, to whom Vergil had before addressed poems, and arguing from the "juvenis" of Eclogue I had made him "sancte puer" in the poem which he wished to have people believe was written by Vergil in his youth. But it escaped his memory that Octavius at that age gave no promise of doing deeds worthy to be remembered.

For those of us who believe Vergil wrote the Culex, there is another explanation, given by Ribbeck in his edition Vergil.

In Catalepta XIV, Vergil defends the memory of an Octavius who is supposed to have died from the effects of over-drinking. He appears to have been a historian and his father outlived him. Catalepta XIII is written to a Musa, both poet and historian. This Musa is about to make a journey to foreign lands, and is evidently much respected by the

From Horace SatI. X, 82, we find an Octavius spoken of, along with Plotius, Varius, Maecenas, Vergil, Valgius and others so he must have been some-where near Vergil's age. Ribbeck and Bahrens also think this Octavius the same as referred to in the Culex, and perhaps Vergil was making a feeble effort at a play on words in lines 6 and 8. If this Octavius Musa was afterwards a historian as he seems to have been, in his youth he was probably fond of history, and the passage in the Culex where Vergil asks him to accept his verses even though they tell not of Jove's sad wars, nor Centaurs, nor Lapiths, may have some connection with that fact. Servius and the Berne Scholia say that an Octavius Musa was one of the triumvirs, who assisted in allotting the farms of Mantua to the veterans.

In this event he would have been instrumental in depriving Vergil of his home. This might at first seem a proof of unkindly feeling between Vergil and Musa but after all Musa was but acting under the Emperor's orders and the other two triumvirs, Pollio and Gallus, were staunch friends of Vergil and it may not be unlikely that Musa was associated with them in their efforts on Vergil's behalf. At any rate this would be no proof that an unfriendly feeling had existed twelve years before.

Bahrens thinks the reverent attitude which Vergil assumes toward Octavius in Catelecta XIII due to his greater age and he emends "sancte puer" to "sancte pater."

But there would be no need of emendation if we take Ribbeck's view that his reverent attitude toward Octavius was due to the fact that Octavius was enjoying an intimacy with persons of higher rank which Vergil had not yet attained. Vergil's worshipful attitude towards his friends is shown by the way in which he speaks of Augustus as a god in

Eclogue I, at a time when Augustus was barely twenty-two years old. Pollio in E. IV is another illustration of this.

In closing I would say that it is a very difficult matter to decide the question of the authorship of the Culex. There are many things which might lead us to think that Vergil could not have written it but since these objections can be answered satisfactorily to some extent and since ancient testimony is on the side of its genuineness, it does not seem a wise thing to deny it without strong proofs.

For this reason I incline to the belief that the Culex was written by Vergil in his sixteenth year and was addressed to Octavius Musa, a contemporary of Vergil's.

Culex of P. Vergilius Maro.

Outline of Vergil's Culex--We, Octavius, under the influence of the tender muse have spun this jesting history of a gnat. Hereafter, our muse will speak to thee in more serious strain when the passing of time shall have made me able to write songs worthy of thy fame.

Phoebus shall be our guide and the author of our song, whether by the river Xanthus or Asteria, or Mt. Parnassus or Castaly. Wherefore, ye Naïdes, go and celebrate this god with sounding chorus, and thou, sacred Pales, to whom is the care of husbandry.

And thou, Octavius, look kindly on my first attempt,--my book sings not of Jove's sad war, nor giants blood, nor of Centaurs or Lapiths, nor the burning of Erechthonian towers by the east, nor Mt. Athos, nor the chains of the Pontic Sea, nor Hellespont, trampled with horses feet when Greece trembled at the coming of the Persians. But my muse, under Phoebus guidance, delights to play a gentle song, more fitted to her strength. And thou, sacred child, may eternal glory be thine and the memory of thy good deeds be imperishable. But let us to our task.

The fiery sun had already mounted the high towers of heaven, shaking from his golden chariot his glittering beams, and Aurora, with her rosy hair, had put to flight the darkness, when the shepherd drove his little goats from the fold to their usual pastures on the summit of a lofty mountain where the broad spreading slopes are covered with grass, which the goats, wandering here and there, pluck at will. And they crop the tender twigs of the willow or the alder.

What benefits belong to a shepherd's life, rendered anxious by no greedy cares. What if he have no fleeces twice dipped in Assyrian dyes, no golden laquer work, nor pictures fine, nor the gleam of precious stones, nor cups engraved by Alcon or Boethius, nor costly pearls from India. He, with pure heart may stretch his body in the soft, dewy grass, which Spring dots with many colored flowers, and lying there, remote from the hollow mockery and deceit of the world, he plays his slender reed. Who can be happier than one who knows neither greedy riches nor sad wars, nor the perils of fighting fleets, nor risks his life while he celebrates the deities with trophies? He worships God with scythe, not by polished art; He delights in groves, the flowers are his frankincense. He has quiet peace, unmixed with care. This his only desire, peace and sleep. O flocks, o farms, o charming vale of the fountain of the Hamadryads, through whose simple care each shepherd leads a quiet life.

So now with their shepherd the goats seek the limpid streams, and the sun has reached his zenith when the shepherd drives his flocks into the shade of the grove, where once Agave, fleeing from Nectileus, came. Here played the satyrs, the dryads and the naiads. Not less than Orpheus stayed the Hebrus by his songs did you accomplish divine choruses with your joyful faces. The very nature of the place is restful. Where the plane trees tower aloft, mingled with the impious lotus, which held Ulysses' companions captives, and the poplars, the changed daughters of the sun, and the oak whose acorns were our primitive food. Here grew also the pine of the Argive ships, the holm-oak and the cypress, the ivy, the poplar and the myrtle. And where a cool fountain flows between its banks, the birds in the trees pour forth their sweet songs.



All about the sound of the frogs and the cicadae, and here and there the flocks lay down to rest in the murmuring breeze.

The shepherd, resting in the shade by the spring, fell asleep. Hither to escape from the intense heat and to bury himself in the mud, comes a mighty serpent, gliding through the grass with huge body. Seeing the shepherd he is filled with rage at the intrusion and with jaws dripping with blood the serpent starts for the shepherd. At this juncture, a little gnat seeing the predicament of the unconscious sleeper, to arouse him, implants his sting upon the temples, in return for which the shepherd immediately crushes him with his broad palm. At the same moment he sees the serpent near at hand and snatching a club he kills the monster with some difficulty.

At length, the flocks safely housed again, night comes on and the shepherd compasses himself for sleep, when the ghost of the gnat appears to him and laments his sorrowful plight. "What have I done to deserve such a cruel fate? Because your life was more precious than my own, I now am tossed about by idle winds while you recline in sleep, saved from a terrible death. But I am compelled to swim Lethe's stream, the prey of Charon. I see the gleaming lights at every threshold, and Tisiphone, who with her serpents shakes her fiery scourge at me, and Cerberus, barking with the glittering snakes about his neck. Alas that mine is such a thankless fate! Where are the rewards of piety and justice and loyalty? I, without care for myself have warded off death from another in return for which I have met my own. I am carried among the Cymerian groves--here sits Otos and Tityus, mindful of thy implacable anger. Latona, the food of birds, Tantalus and Sisyphus. The maidens whom Eriñys enkindled, the Colchian mother, Procne and Philomella, the sons of Cadmus fighting in mortal combat.

I am borne in another direction to the Elysian plains. Here Persephone urges her furies against me. Here is Alcestis and Penelope with her slain suitors at a distance and Eurydice, punished, Orpheus for looking back. Thou, Orpheus, wert a brave man who feared neither Cerberus nor Pluto, nor Phlegthon, nor Tartarus, nor the judgement seat. Made bold by fortune, Orpheus stopped the rivers and caused the trees to follow him,--the moon restrained her horses to listen. And by this same power he overcame the strength of Tartarus and would have set Eurydice free had he not broken the decree of the gods. And here are the two sons of Aeacus. Peleus and Telamon. Who could not recount the mishaps of the Trojan war?--the Trojan slain, and Xanthus flowing with blood and Hector hurling wounds, weapons, slaughter, and fires at the enemy. And Mt. Ida furnishing firebrands to her foster children--Hector on one side--Achilles on the other, and the body of Hector dragged thrice around the walls of Troy. The slaying of Achilles by Paris and of Ajax by Ulysses--Ulysses adventures with the Cicyons, the Laestrigones, Scylla, Charybdis, Aetna and the Cyclops and the journey to Hades. Here sits also Agamemon by whom thy Trojan towers were burned. Here are other heroes of equal courage--the Fabii, the Decii, and the Horatii, Camillus, Curtius, Mutius, Curius, Flaminius and the Scipios. They are held in honor, while I am compelled to wander about the dark Plutonian lakes and Phlegthon where Minos has his judgment seat to whom I must perforce tell the cause of my death.--I depart never to return--but do thou frequent the green pastures and thy cool groves." Thus he spoke and departed.

The shepherd when he awakes filled with grief at the thought of the gnat's death constructs with great care a tomb beside the river's mossy bank, heaping up a mound and setting up a marble stone. And round about he plants sweet flowers--acanthus, roses, lilies, violets, spartan myrtle, hyacinth, crocus, laurel, oleander, the sabine flower, Crysanthus, ivy, box, amaranthus, oxeye, evergreen pine, narcissus, and all the beautiful flowers of spring-time. On the stone he placed this inscription:

Little gnat, to thee for the gift of life, the keeper of the flocks dedicates this sad testimonial.



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